

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 00173 110930Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T AMMAN 0173

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, JO,US, IS, SY
SUBJECT: MAQARIN DAM -- NEXT STEPS

REF: (A) 76 STATE 309283, (B) STATE 004323, (C) 76 AMMAN 7583

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF REFTEL B, I SAW KING HUSSEIN ON THE QUESTION. AFTER A FULL EXPLANATION OF OUR INTENTIONS, HE AGREED THAT WE SHOULD NOW GO AHEAD AND PROVIDE THE ISRAELIS WITH THE HARZA REPORT AS BACKGROUND FOR OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO EXPLORE JORDAN WATER RIGHTS ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

1. WHEN I SAW KING AFTERNOON JANUARY 10, I TOLD HIM THAT WE HAD MADE SOME DECISIONS ON OUR OWN ROLE IN THE MAQARIN DAM QUESTION WHICH FOLLOWED UP MY EARLIER DISCUSSION WITH HIM. I SAID THAT WE HAD DECIDED TO ASSUME AT PRESENT AN INFOMAL GOOD OFFICES ROLE. I PUT THE STRESS FOR HIM ON AN INFORMAL ROLE AND SAID THAT THIS WOULD ALSO, I THOUGHT, HELP US TO RESPECT HIS DESIRE FOR CONFIDENTIALITY. I REPEATED FOR HIM AS I HAD SOME MONTHS AGO THAT CONFIDENTIALITY WAS DESIRABLE IN OUR JUDGMENT BUT THAT WE WERE NOT SURE

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IT COULD BE PRESERVED FOREVER.

2. MOVING ON I EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT WE HAD A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS WE WISHED TO PUT TO THE ISRAELIS -- QUESTIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE WHICH HAD BEEN RAISED DURING PROFESSOR BAXTER'S TRIP TO AMMAN. I THEN REVIEWED THESE QUESTIONS FOR HIM IN DETAIL. IN CONCLUSION, I SAID WE FELT

IT WAS NOW TIME TO MOVE ON AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY CHANCE OF HOLDING UP THE ONGOING WORK ON THE MAQARIN DAM.

3. I THEN REFERRED TO THE HARZA REPORT WHICH WE HAD EARLIER DISCUSSED. I NOTED THAT SINCE OUR DISCUSSION OF THE HARZA REPORT US AND JORDAN HAD MET IN WASHINGTON AND HAD TAKEN SOME DECISIONS ABOUT ONE AREA OF THE REPORT WHICH MIGHT HAVE CAUSED PROBLEMS. THIS CONCERNED THE MEANS OF CONVEYING WATER FROM THE DAM TO THE EAST GHOR CANAL. I THEN ELABORATED THE ALTERNATIVES SELECTED AND THE ONE DISCARDED.

4. FINALLY I TOLD THE KING THAT WE HAD ALSO REVIEWED THE HARZA REPORT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF JORDAN'S NEGOTIATING POSITION. I EXPLAINED THAT THE REPORT IN OUR JUDGMENT PROTECTED JORDAN'S VIEWS ON THE DELIVERY OF 17 MCM TO THE YARMOUK TRIANGLE AREA.

5. FINALLY, I TOLD THE KING THAT WE WISHED TO PREVENT ANY DISTRUST OR UNCERTAINTY FROM ARISING IN THE MINDS OF THE ISRAELIS. IT SEEMED THEY MIGHT ALREADY HAVE DEVELOPED SOME SUSPICIONS ABOUT JORDAN'S INTENTIONS WITH THE DAM PROJECT ON THE BASIS OF THE EARLIER UNAVAILABILITY OF THE HARZA REPORT TO THEM. I TOLD HIM IT WAS OUR JUDGMENT THAT FOR US TO MOVE AHEAD IN AN EVENHANDED BASIS WITH BOTH SIDES, WE SHOULD GIVE THEM THE REPORT, DISCUSS IT WITH THEM, AND DO SO ON THE BASIS OF THEIR WILLINGNESS TO PROTECT ITS CONFIDENTIALITY.

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6. THE KING SIAD IN RESPONSE THAT HE WAS GRATEFUL THAT WE HAD UNDERTAKEN THE INFORMAL GOOD OFFICES ROLE AND THAT HE COUNTED ON US FOR SUCCESS AND WISHED TO DO ALL NECESSARY TO PROTECT JORDAN'S WATER RIGHTS POSITION. IF WE HAD DECIDED IN THE COURSE OF CARRYING OUT THAT ROLE THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO GIVE THE ISRAELIS THE REPORT, THAT WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR HIM AND WE SHOULD DO AS WE THOUGHT NECESSARY.

7. I THANKED THE KING FOR HIS COOPERATION AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO BE FLEXIBLE WITH US IN HANDLING THE PROBLEM. IN ADDITION, AT MY REQUEST, THE KING AUTHORIZED ME TO BRIEF THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE HEAD OF THE JORDAN VALLEY COMMISSION IN GENERAL TERMS CONCERNING OUR NEXT STEPS. FINALLY, THE KING MADE CLEAR TO ME HOW IMPORTANT HE CONSIDERS THIS PROJECT AND HOW APPRECIATIVE HE IS OF OUR WILLINGNESS TO MOVE AHEAD IN ATTEMPTING TO RESOLVE

ANY PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT ARISE OVER THE WATER RIGHTS
ISSUE.
PICKERING

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